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The Walls of Hamelin

THE WALLS of HAMELIN

BY CHARLES W. KENNEDY

UNIV. OF VIRGINIA

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TO
BARBARA CARY KENNEDY
THIS LITTLE BOOK

M89175

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Contents

I

I HAVE KNOWN BEAUTY	3
O SINGING HOUR OF LOVE	5
LOVE'S MEMORIES	7
MOTHS	10
A HOMESPUN HEAVEN	11
ONCE CAME A FLAME	13
ON THE BREAKWATER	15
MEMORY	17
SWEETER, FAIRER THAN ALL THESE	18
O NEVER SPRING RETURNS	21
THE SHINING DARK	22
SPRING IN PROVINCETOWN	23
THE MARSH	25
BEACH SAND	26
RAGGED SAILORS	28
SOON COMETH MAY	29
A GRAY DAY	31
IN THE MIST	33
LOVE WALKED WITH ME	34
AND THEN CAME SPRING	36
O WHERE DOTH BEAUTY DWELL	37

II

THE TURNING TIDE	41
YOU WHO ONCE WALKED BESIDE ME	43
THERE IS A SECRET MUSIC	44
THE ENCHANTED WOOD	45
BESIDE THE HEARTH	46
IN A CHILD'S GARDEN	47
LOVE TOOK THE SWIFTNESS OF WIND	48
THE WISH I WISH TONIGHT	49
I HUNG THE WALLS WITH HOLLY BOUGHS	51
THE ORACLE	52
DEPARTURE	53
I SHALL RETURN	54

ORCHARD TREES 55
WHEN SPRING RAN LAUGHING DOWN THE HILL 57
THE END OF THE DAY 58
BROTHERS OF THE WIND 59
THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA 61
DEATH IN THE REEDS 63
THE SHIP OF DREAMS 64
NIGHT JEWELS 65
THE QUEST 66
GHOST SHIPS 67
VANISHED SAILS 69
BEAUTY DOTH EVER TEASE 70
THE SHORES OF SLEEP 71

III

AS I WENT DOWN TO PROVINCETOWN 75
THE LONG ROAD 78
THE TRUANT 79
HEART'S DESIRE 80
WHO'LL BUY A ROSE 81
SILVER PENNIES 82
A PREACHER IN THE MARKET 83
DAY AFTER DAY 84
THE GATES OF DAWN 85

IV

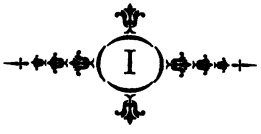
THE TORCH-BEARERS 89
PRINCETON, 1917 91
TO H. C. B. 92

V

A CHRISTMAS CHARM 95
NURSERY SONGS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE 96
THREE SONGS FOR CHRISTMAS 98
A CHRISTMAS PRAYER 100

VI

THE WALLS OF HAMELIN 103

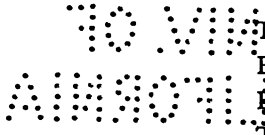


I Have Known Beauty

O rain-sweet loveliness of the warm earth,
Returning with the May in green rebirth!
Thou who art beauty in the flowering grass,
A singing in the summer winds that pass,
A bird-note wild beside the violet sea,
Or snow-drift blowing from the wild plum tree!
Thou wise interpreter of noisy years,
Cherishing pain and glorifying tears,
Depart not from me—be my light to mark
The way unto the still, enfolding dark.

What silent magic lights thy dreaming grace
Filling the wind and every haunted place
With memories of love—O wild and sweet
The wind-blown grasses round thy rose-white feet!
That bird-song—doth it rain from yonder tree
Or from remembered gardens by the sea
Long years ago? The sorcery of the moon
Hath borrowed golden splendor from a noon
Long vanished, when the blue skies dreamed above
A wild earth singing round the feet of love.

O loveliness of the enchanting earth!
Thou dream divine of beauty come to birth!
Thou art our love of life, our hate of death,
Thou art our heritage—thou art the breath
Of all our being in the sunlit years



That hasten unto night. O loveliness,
Be thou beside me with thy soft caress.
Bring to mine ears, till sound shall come no more,
The organ-swell of breakers on the shore,
The robin's song from some white orchard tree
Wind-tossed upon high cliffs beside the sea,
The cry of fishing sea-gulls, shrill and harsh,
Borne on the sea wind from the salt sea marsh.

Bring thou the fragrance of dark, mountain pines,
Of fern-rimmed pools, and skyward clambering vines;
Bring thou the warm scent of wide meadow spaces,
The silence of old gardens, and still places
Amid the beech woods; bring the memory
Of dreaming days beside the whispering sea
And dreaming nights when interlacing spars
Made shadowy patterns to enclose the stars.
Beauty that having been shall always be!
Do thou enfold me with thy mystery
Through all the years—a witchery, a flame,
A melody, a sweetness beyond name.

O loveliness of the enchanting earth!
O haunting splendor that doth stamp the worth
Of all our hope of life and dream of death,
Be with me—stir me—fill me with thy breath!
Lift up mine eyes upon the flowering light
That takes a glory from the coming night.
So may I say, when the last hour is spent,
"I have known beauty"—and so sleep content.

O Singing Hour of Love

O singing hour of love!
O flower of dreams
Fairer than stars above
Clear running streams!

Thou only hast the key
Of beauty's house,
Beset with melody
Under white boughs.

All hues of changing light
Are beauty's dower;
Breath of the coming night,
And fading flower

Wherewith the wind is sweet . . .
All transient things
Running with frail feet
And fragile wings.

She weaveth nets of dew
For budding flowers;
She crowneth earth with blue
And silver hours.

Knowing that death comes after,
And the dark,
She toucheth life with laughter;
And the lark

Singeth alway her song:
That earth is dear
Because no hour is long,
And night is near;

Singeth that love is sweet
Under the sun,
Because time runneth fleet
For love begun.

Love's Memories

Three seals upon my heart are set
With magic light that lingers yet,
Love's memories that shall not pass
While sun is warm upon the grass,
And moonlight sleeps upon the hill.
Though the gray years work their will
To dull the pain of beauty, Spring,
With budding rose and bluebird's wing,
Shall find me still remembering.

One first taught me of the sea
And all its faithless witchery;
Taught me joy of ropes and spars,
Sailing under friendly stars.
On the wide, warm-scented beaches,
Where the nodding marsh-grass reaches
Beckoning arms to golden light,
We dreamed by day, we dreamed by night.
Beach pea, beach plum, bayberry,
Flowered in beauty; the laughing sea
Slowly climbed the pebbled shore,
Tapping, tapping, at the door
Of the green, inviolate earth.
By the dreams that came to birth,
By the dreams that linger still,
Though the light pales on the hill,

Though the cliffs fail in the sea,
Thy seal is set on memory.

One called me once to walk with him
In a far land beyond the rim
Of barren days, where sunlight shone
More golden-warm than heart has known
Save on blue, Homeric seas,
Or gardens of Hesperides.
He laid a book before mine eyes,
And all the singers, all the wise,
Heart-broken dead became my friends.
In the black night when doom descends
He taught me law; out of the dust
He showed me beauty's upward thrust
To life and light; ah! when no more
His hand shall be upon the door,
I shall not lose him—in each spark
Of beauty singing in the dark,
His voice shall come unto mine ear,
And I shall know him somehow near.

One came with tender, starry eyes
Under the blue, unclouded skies,
And all the green earth flamed with light,
And beauty singing in the night.
Life became a dream, a vision,
A haunting light on streams Elysian,
A fragrance of the wild grape crushed,

A dew-flower in the dawn light hushed.
By earth transformed and magic skies
Her seal is set until life dies,
And longer, longer, if there be
Some echo of life's melody.

Three seals upon my heart are set
With magic light that lingers yet;
And the last sun-warmed, fragrant Spring
Shall find me still remembering.

Moths

I would not climb the lighthouse stair
In the dim night,
Because of little ghosts that flutter there
About the light;

Pale, fragile, broken wings that beat
Against the glass,
Light as the fingers of the west wind sweet
Upon the grass.

O pale moths, in this dawn of Spring,
Hath one frail spark
Of wonder drawn you broken, fluttering,
Into the dark?

O still and beautiful, brave death!
O swift, sweet pain!
To be made fey with beauty until breath
Is softly slain!

A Homespun Heaven

Some day when I have reached the end
Of all the strength I have to spend,
When shadows lengthen from the west
And time has come to stop and rest,
If heaven be a place apart
Where peace is sealed upon the heart,
I think I'll try my hand alone
And build a heaven of my own.

O golden streets are fine, no doubt,
And golden rivers flowing out
By pearly gates; such dreams evoke
A joy, perhaps, for inland folk.

I want a sweep of sand and sea!
Beyond a wind-blown apple tree
Tossing in the salty gale
I want the sea-line and a sail!

I'll build my heaven where great winds come,
Where bayberry and wild beach plum
Spill their fragrance on the wind.
Under gnarled, twisted apple boughs
I'll find a spot to build love's house,

With white-washed walls and hanging eaves,
With moss-grown roof to match the leaves . . .
Still place of peace to heal the mind . . .
Where windows open to the breeze
And the sleepy drone of bees.

I'll have a glass to scan the sky,
To watch the plunging ships go by
When comes the menacing, dull roar
Of racing breakers on the shore.
Upon my walls I'll have a row
Of ten, wise, magic books I know,
To bring all ages and all lands
Within the stretching of my hands.

I'll have a garden filled with phlox,
Delicate, pale hollyhocks,
Lavender and five o'clocks;
Each old-fashioned flower that grows,
Berry bushes set in rows,
And every lilac bloom that blows.

O little heaven of heart's delight!
Here would I meet the enfolding night,
Wishing for no eternal bliss
More than such homespun heaven as this!

Once Came a Flame

My heart is saddened with dream,
And mine eyes with the beauty of May,
When the dawns under white boughs gleam,
And the dusk empurples the bay.

The marsh-grass breaks into flame
At the passionate feet of Spring;
Only the heart is tame
With long remembering.

Once came a flame and a splendor
With silver swiftness of light,
More than the moon can render,
More than the stars by night.

Once was the vision given
More transforming than death,
And the ancient heavens were riven,
And new stars shone—for a breath—

But the sunlight pales on the earth,
And a shadow sleeps on the sea;
The frail hours come to birth
Untouched of minstrelsy.

Love past can not rise with a dream,
Nor youth be reborn with the May.
Can a thought rekindle the first star's gleam,
Or the rose-dawn of day?

On the Breakwater

Here the long road hath ending; here at last
The white dunes cease, and the gray rocks are massed
Against the tearing fingers of the sea.
Southward the moors are sweet with bayberry
And all the shining stretches of the bay
Glow with gold fire, or darken with the gray
Of gliding shadows quenching the bright flame
In tall marsh-grass that whispereth thy name.

All loveliness hath ending—O my dear,
It falleth in a day or in a year;
After the sunrise cometh noon—and night,
And darkness runneth on the heels of light.
This is of love the bitter, tragic doom—
To cease to be—to vanish from the room
That once was bright with laughter and with Spring.
New life shall be—new love have blossoming
Under the pale, rose skies of breaking day,
Under the scented branches of the May;
But never twice the miracle of dawn,
Or love's feet flashing on the dewy lawn.

Ah, my beloved, let me feel thee near.
Seaward the channel lights are burning clear,
And silver starlight kindles in the dark.
Time hath not slain the wonder of the lark
That sang love's dawn, nor dimmed the sunny ways

Bright happiness hath overflowed our days.
The plunging organ-surges of the sea
Throb with a fuller, deeper melody;
And all the glowing spaces of the hill
In Autumn's burnished hues are lovely still.

Though loveliness hath ending in a sleep,
The soul of all things fair doth vigil keep
Within the heart, where the slow, kindly years
Are garnered up beyond the touch of tears.

Once from the cup of Spring Love poured to me
The wine of all time past, all time to be.

Memory

I swore that all the beauty of thine eyes
Should be a dream forgotten; nevermore
Thy presence near, thy hand upon the door
To shake me with remembered agonies.

And so I dreamed that all old things were slain . . .
Then some still night of stars, a breath of Spring,
A fallen rose leaf, bluebirds on the wing . . .
And all the dead past kindles into pain.

Sweeter, Fairer than all These

When the long sweep of drifted snow
On fields where now the grasses glow
With golden fire shall write the token
That summer's scented wand is broken;
When on the hearth the ashes pale,
And windows rattle in the gale
Of driving sleet; when doors are barred
Against the cold that freezes hard
On creaking trees, whose boughs forget
The Spring when April dews were wet;
When the still shadows gather round,
And in the darkening room no sound,
Either to comfort or to mock,
Save the slow ticking of the clock;
Then, of the memories that throng
Of happiness remembered long,
I wonder which would shine most bright
In the watches of the night,
When the silent hours at last
Recall the record of the past!

I think the sweetest sound would be
The fugitive, faint melody
Of beauty's song; the fairest sight
The magic gleam of beauty's light;
The memory of loveliness
That doth encompass earth and bless.
The dawn light on midsummer morn,
The wind's frail fingers in the corn;
White houses seen through orchard trees,
And mimic villages of bees;
The white surf like a silver band
To bind the blue sea to the land;
Meadows gay with golden rod,
Ragged sailor, milkweed pod
Ripe with spun-silk, creamy down
To weave elf's cap, or fairy's gown.

Sound of quail in meadows calling;
Sound of hidden waters falling
From a tumbling mountain stream
To silent, secret pools where gleam
The deep, still shadows of the trout.
On green, cool wood roads winding out
Through forest aisles, the busy tap
Of woodpecker with fiery cap,
On some lightning-blasted tree
Engaging his shrewd husbandry.

But sweeter, fairer than all these
Children's laughter on the breeze,
Eager voices, busy hands,
White feet flashing on the sands,
Gold hair burning in the sun,
Till the flying day be done.
Sweeter, fairer than all these
The thousand homespun memories
That sunny hours of friendship give
With men who make life great to live;
All the natural, kindly ties
That bind men's hearts under the skies,
Making life higher than the stars,
And wider than all prison bars.

O loveliness, by love set free
From touch of pale mortality,
Be with us still where shadows throng
In some last strain of deathless song,
Some glory of remembered light,
To bring us beauty in the night.

O Never Spring Returns

O never Spring returns
Beside the hill,
Or hawthorn blossom burns,
But there is still

Breath of a vanished May
On bud and flower,
Light of a vanished day
In every hour;

When from the flowering dust
Love's songs were made,
And one swift, piercing thrust
Of beauty's blade

Opened the wound unhealing
Until death,
That aches with Spring's revealing,
And the breath

Of loveliness that passes
Frail and fleet,
Bending the summer grasses
With unseen feet.

The Shining Dark

Hark! From his shadowy station on the hill
Waileth the unforgiving whip-poor-will,
Unto the stars appealing once again
With dazed reiteration of old pain;
The still, soft-stealing night winds touch and stir
The slumbering branches of the scented fir,
And the high stars with silver fingers mark
The earth with beauty dreaming in the dark.

O Love! this very starlight is a dream
Of fires extinct, and darkened orbs whence stream
Long memories of light; all time is one,
And all that hath been is, under the sun;
Nor light is cleft from dark, nor dark from light,
But both are beauty clothing day and night;
And no man knoweth joy and grief apart,
But only love that kindleth in the heart.
End and beginning, hope and memory,
Pain that is song, grief that is melody,
Death that is life, and life that knows no name . . .
All these shall still be one thing and the same;
Yea! in the night between the worlds a spark
Shall kindle beauty in the shining dark.

Spring in Provincetown

Beauty hath made this land her own;
On sand and sea, on lichened stone,
Her mark is set—a long caress
Of dreaming light, a loveliness
Of form and hue, a witchery
That haunts the margins of the sea.
Pale gold of dawn on crumbling slips
Where drowse the fettered, restless ships;
White glare of blazing, cloudless noons
On the hot stillness of the dunes;
Upon the bar 'round bleaching hulls
A ceaseless crying of the gulls.

Child, child, so gay, so sure,
Trusting morning to endure;
While the golden hours run
Finding love and beauty one!
When love and loveliness are blended
What shall be when love is ended?
When the words of love are spoken,
When the ivory walls are broken,
What remains?—My dear, my dear,
It will still be lovely here.
Still shall Autumn woods be gay,
And apple boughs grow white in May;
Still shall crooked streets run down
To make a crooked, white-walled town;

Sea winds still shall bring the scents
Of far, remembered continents.
It will still be lovely here . . .
May you never know, my dear,
When youth and love have ceased to be,
Beauty's bitter mockery!

The Marsh

In the dim gray marshes the white winds stir
Down tangled sedge-aisles, green and still;
And the air is jewelled with flash and whir
Of wild wings waking and hearts athrill.

The slow tides turn with the turning hour,
An endless pulsing of changeless sea;
Billowing marsh waves foam in flower,
With reed notes mocking the waves that flee.

The sea winds murmur of dim tomorrows,
Joys of the brown earth, grief of the wave;
Tongueless wailing of old sea-sorrows
In the gray marsh whispering finds a grave.

Shadows lengthen, and dusk returning
Snares in the marsh reeds blossoming
Far sea-dreams in the sunset burning,
Shadow-visions and starlight yearning,
Sleepy twitter and muffled wing.

Beach Sand

Up the scented hill-slope Spring,
With feet of flame, comes hastening,
And from his topmost, leafy spray
I heard the cardinal today.

Apple boughs are blowing white
And hawthorn scents the moonlit night;
All the green wood on the hill
Beauty fashions to her will . . .
But my heart will not be still,
Singing of the white beach sand
At the far edge of the land
Where the wind blows sharp and salt,
And Spring's white, fragrant armies halt.
At the fish-shed pilings rapping
All day long the waves are slapping;
All day long the gulls are crying
Where the fishing boats are lying
Drifting with the lazy swell
That swings the deep-voiced channel bell.

Hawthorn buds are fair at noon
And apple boughs against the moon;
Dogwood, violets, and clover,
These are charms to charm a rover;
Thrush and robin pour again

Silver notes like silver rain;
All the green wood on the hill
Beauty fashions to her will . . .
But my heart will not be still.

Where the marsh-grass meets the sea,
That is where my heart would be;
Where the tall, white ships go by
Underneath an azure sky.

Ragged Sailors

Around the lighthouse, white and tall,
Bright blue against the rain-washed wall
Grow clumps of ragged sailors massed
Like weary hearts that here at last
Have found a peace, where flaming sun
With shining, golden feet doth run
Upon the sea, and climbing moon
Nightly silvers hill and dune.

O laughing bloom! if it may be
That death doth mould life secretly
Unto new life—a flower, a flame,
A dream of life without a name . . .
Were it not peace for sea-spent men,
Wave-tossed, wind-driven, to know again
The light in quiet, sunny places
Untroubled by the windy spaces
Of running sea, and flying foam;
Firm-rooted in the still, dark loam
Were it not peace to know at night
The steady shining of the light,
To feel beside the lighthouse wall
No fear of any wind at all?

Soon Cometh May

Soon cometh May,
And soon—O soon—
Wild plum blossoms
Under the moon.

Far—O far—
In the blossoming night
Faint minstrelsy
Of all delight,

Touching the heart
With flame, with song,
When hours are fleet,
And dreams are long.

Beauty returneth
Upon the earth,
A flaming, rain-sweet,
Rose-white birth.

Beauty returneth
Veiled in light,
A silver flame
In the silver night.

Beauty returneth,
Runneth fleet;
Her sandals fail not
From her feet.

Soon cometh May,
And soon—O soon—
Wild plum blossoms
Under the moon.

A Gray Day

Easterly winds and driving rain
Are blurring every window pane
With crystal dots, and silver threads
That slip and slide across the glass
Like silver serpents in the grass.

Under gray skies in wind-whipped beds
The tiger-lilies, tall and frail,
Turn their backs upon a gale
Of scudding cloud, and racing sea,
And wind that runneth restlessly.

Ah! love, hath all the former day
Of golden glory passed away?
Of Spring across the meadows calling,
Of moonlight on the orchards falling,
Of rose-white blossoms on the bough?

Though the gray rain is blowing now
Upon the hill, and great gusts sweep
The fields where meadow grass grew deep,
Though the wind waileth ceaselessly,
That which hath been still shall be;
All that hath lived liveth ever;
All that hath loved dieth never,
If once youth flamed with magic light,
If once the green boughs burned to white!

O light that fadeth not again!
O white boughs shining through the rain!
O beautiful the blossoms round our feet,
Where love was young, and beauty once
was sweet!

In the Mist

Mist and the voice of a bell,
As the slow tides flow;
And the shadowy, blundering, fog-bound
ships of the sea
Grope to and fro.

Faint hum of sailors, and laughter,
Tiny port-holes a-light;
Then—fog-strangled churning of engines,
hoarse growl of a horn,
Recede in the night.

In dream-light of visions returning
Years storm-darkened gleam;
And sudden winds singing one word—one
word I would say
Ere you vanish in dream.

One golden-winged, jewel-wrought word!
Would life's gates spring apart? . . .
Only the mist and the slow-swinging,
bronze-throated bell . . .
Dumb lips, dead heart.

Love Walked with Me

Many an hour of many a day
I walked alone a winding way
Through fields of clover, up the hill,
Where pines croon low, and waters spill
From rock to rock, from pool to pool
Moss-edged with velvet crisp and cool.

Many an hour, by many a way,
I watched the pageant of the day;
Saw beauty veil in golden mist
The willow boughs that Spring had kissed;
Heard beauty run in golden notes
That filled the air like dancing motes;
Found beauty's footprint, found her trace,
But never met her in her grace,
Although the heart stood still to hear
The rustle of her presence near
Stealing from her worshippers,
Stirring as the tall grass stirs,
Or creeping through the scented clover
At hide-and-seek with those that love her.

On a new hour of a new day
Love walked with me that leafy way,
And life found fragrance and heart's ease
Amid the quietness of trees.
Yea! all the hours of all the day
Love touched the known, familiar way
With magic from the heart of May...
Then in each secret, shadowy place
Mine eyes saw beauty face to face.

And Then Came Spring

The wild rose blossoms on the hill,
The red rose by the door;
The little wren hath built again
Just as before.

There's bloom upon the apple boughs,
And flash of bluebird's wing . . .
But who shall come to sing the song
You used to sing?

O Where Doth Beauty Dwell

O where doth beauty dwell,
Ye who pursue her?
What hour doth strike her knell,
All ye that rue her?

Who knoweth loveliness
In common things,
All homely joys that bless,
Needeth no wings

To climb the steep, blue sky,
Or search the earth;
In every kindly tie,
And natural birth,

Is beauty lodged. O sweet
The sun and rain;
Toil and black bread and meat,
And toil again;

Roof-tree and bright hearth-stone,
Clear, running spring;
Harvest of seed sown
And blossoming;

Slow words of simple truth,
Deeds of high end;
The laughing faith of youth;
Handclasp of friend;

The warm soil's sunny mirth,
The moonlight's spell;
In these hath beauty birth,
Doth beauty dwell.

O not on honey-dew
Is beauty fed;
She doth her life renew
With wine and bread.

She stands where thou dost stand,
Is where thou art;
Nearer than foot or hand,
Near as the heart.

II

The Turning Tide

Slack water, and a night bereft of stars;
A bitter wind blows in from out the dark,
And I go seaward with the turning tide.

The yellow lights that blink across the night,
The fragrance of salt marsh, the incessant whisper
Of waves upon the rocks—these things have been
Blood of my blood, bone of my bone since birth.

The dear loved faces that have filled my years,
The voices I would know across the world,
These will remain, and one by one be numbered
With those that vanish from the kindly shore.

New lands, new faces, yea! it may be—peace;
But never again the old familiar greeting,
The homely word, the honest smile that lights
The worn and furrowed face with holiness.

Day after day sails vanish into silence,
And we who linger, wonder and are still.

Then in the night the call, insistent, low,
Offering the heart nor joy nor grief,
But keen-edged as a sword that shears away
The treasure of the dear remembered years.

The rhythmic slap of halyards on the mast
Sounds from the darkness, straining anchor chains
Speak of the currents setting to the sea,
And I go seaward with the turning tide.

Before—the unknown silent years. Behind . . .
Inviolable and crowned with morning light,
The secret, dreaming fairylands of Dawn.

You Who Once Walked beside Me

Where have you strayed, my son? To what far dwelling,
You who once walked beside me—arm in my arm?
You from whose boyish heart laughter was ever welling,
Where have you found a haven—beyond all harm?

Where are the magic roads we tramped together,
Sunlit valley and hill, and the white ways of the plain?
Where are the dreams we dreamed in the rain-sweet April
weather?
All these are gone—returning never again.

Never again the voice of your eager calling;
Never again the touch of your hand on my arm!
And I face the empty years knowing Time's slow sands
falling
Hold now for you—for me—no more of harm.

There is a Secret Music

There is a secret music haunts the hours
Within my garden wall,
Where many a bird long vanished from her bowers,
Repeats her olden call.

And round the wind-blown nests of vanished Springs,
Empty of joy or strife,
Still haunts a glory of soft, brooding wings,
Still clings a dream of life.

The grassy walks are gay with petals flying
From laughing winds at play;
And yet I know not if they've long been lying,
Or if they fell today.

For Time has lost his witchery and wonder;
Yea! while my garden grows
Shall never more resolve the years asunder . . .
Enchanted by a rose.

The Enchanted Wood

Out of the dark I have heard you calling,
Spirit of wind and light!
Out of the dusk and the white dew falling
Heard you singing of joy divine.
And my heart has thrilled in the silent night,
And my feet have sought you, Heart of Mine,
In the silver dusk and the white dew falling.

Shimmer of moonlight, glimmer of pearl,
Mist on the air like a filmy lace;
Eddying wood-wraiths dance and swirl
Where dreams are born in the forest cool.
O Heart of Mine, I have seen your face
In the silver dusk by the shadowy pool,
Where eddying wood-wraiths dance and swirl.

Out of the wood when shades are falling,
And flickering elf-lights gleam;
Out of the dusk I hear you calling,
A fugitive presence, a haunting song!
O, ever elusive, luring dream!
The heart is lonely and time is long,
In the silver dusk and the white dew falling.

Beside the Hearth

From fairyland she came to me,
And dwelt—a blessed while;
Lo! All the shadows of the room
Were lightened by her smile.

She took my hand as one who said,
"If thou can'st not be free,
I know no other freedom save
To dwell here, love, with thee."

She swept the room—upon the hearth
She lit an altar flame;
And peace abides within the house
At the naming of her name.

Yet sometimes in the stillness here
I know she hears again
The laughter of the elves that dance
Between the drops of rain.

And while she lays her hand in mine,
Turning her eyes to me,
I know she dreams of fairy ships
That sail a fairy sea.

In a Child's Garden

I could be happy in remembering
Her laughing eyes, her dancing feet,
Her voice that sings in every wind of Spring
A music elfin-sweet.

I could be happy but to see in dream
Her flower-face, her flying hair,
To know again the vision-worlds that gleam
In soft enchantment there.

Love Took the Swiftness of Wind

Love took the swiftness of wind,
And fragrance of wood flowers,

Laughter of silver stars,
Silence of summer hours,

Whiteness of new-fallen snow,
Sweetness of April rain,

And fashioned them to a child
Slender as waving grain . . .

Who that knew her laughter,
And her flying feet,

Would think of blowing wind as swift
Or April rain as sweet ?

The Wish I Wish Tonight

Starlight, star bright,
Fairest star I've seen tonight,
For little hearts you light to bed,
Lagging foot and nodding head,
For sleepy eyes that smile to see
Your taper shine so cheerily,
Starlight, star bright,
This is the wish I wish tonight:

Beauty to shine on seeing eyes!
Beauty to mould the heart!—O wise
Who follow beauty far and far
By glowing sun and shining star,
Beyond all that the heart has known
Here where our lives are thrown;
Or whether on familiar land
Where year by year salt winds have blown
The wild plum blossoms on the sand,
In grass-grown paths and simple ways
Come golden days.
Far or near, come weal or woe,
Summer sun and winter snow,
Out of the mire, out of the dust,
Beauty's climbing tendrils thrust
Upward to eternal light,
A dream, a sorcery, by night,

A glory in the flowering grass,
A singing in the wind that shall not pass,
Until the heart is still
Under the wind-blown grasses on the hill.

That love may be as sandals to swift feet,
For surely love is venturesome and fleet;
Love is a flame, love is a light,
Love is a singing in the night;
Love is a vision and a dream,
Love only is, where all things seem.

Starlight, star bright,
Ray of blue, and ray of white,
This is the wish I wish tonight.

I Hung the Walls with Holly Boughs

I lit the laughing candle lights
Upon your Christmas tree;
I hung the walls with holly boughs
In joy of thee.

Now only in a lonely heart
Your Christmas candles glow;
And the holly boughs lie spread—lie spread—
Under the snow.

The Oracle

O heart! Is not my palace fair
As eye may know?

Nay! Children's blocks have built as rare
Long years ago.

O heart! Have not my battles sought
Life's golden store?

Nay! Leaden soldiers oft have fought
A nobler war.

O heart! Are not my days well sped?
No hour brings tears.

Dost thou not know that thou art dead
These many years?

Departure

I knew it would be bitter at the end
To say farewell;
To take the gray road winding, pass the bend,
So passing from the fields I loved so well.

I knew it would be hard to turn the key
Upon the past;
The plan of life we wrought so patiently,
The secret things we cherished to the last.

And yet I knew not how that earth had grown
Of me a part;
How with its living seeds my life was sown,
And all its roses rooted in my heart.

I did not know the years had treasured up
A robin's song;
I did not dream one sip from one rose-cup
Had worked enchantment for a whole life long.

I Shall Return

I shall return
At evening with the falling of the dew,
Through the gray dusk of some still night in May;
Needing no words at last to say to you
The thousand things that once I could not say.

I shall return
With the night wind that stirs your quiet room,
Or some shy fragrance drifting up the glen
Like kisses blown from apple boughs in bloom;
And you shall know how much I loved you—then.

Orchard Trees

Plucked harp or lute strings wake
No melodies
Sweet as the wind doth shake
From orchard trees;

Fine nets of silver spun
Gleam not so fair
As silver buds upon
The evening air.

A dreamer, slow of speech,
And rough of hand,
Once scanned this pleasant reach
Of smiling land,

Choosing the sunlit hill,
Long years ago,
For flowering trees that fill
The orchard row.

He watched the young green turning
To creamy white;
He loved the young boughs burning
With rosy light.

He heard when winds awoke
Their symphony,
Faint song or surge that broke
Like breaking sea.

He saw when redbird's coat
Or bluebird's wing
Flamed like a colored note
From green lute string.

Stoop-shouldered, silent, slow,
Loving the sod,
Did he not say, "I know
Not even God

Could make a sweeter thing
Under the sun
Than white boughs May winds sing
Their songs upon;

Could grant a fairer boon
Between the seas
Than silver from the moon
On orchard trees."

When Spring Ran Laughing Down the Hill

When Spring ran laughing down the hill,
And sang in every hawthorn hedge,
I rose with all my heart a-thrill
And followed her by reed and sedge.

I heard her song ring sweet and clear
Through all the green world, far and wide . . .
Then came I where you once were dear,
And all Spring's music broke and died.

The End of the Day

Sitting with folded hands,
With weary eyes and dim,
She sees the glow on the western sands,
The sun on the ocean's rim.
And her heart turns back to the nights
Of song and roses and love,
When life was sweet in the diamond-lights
Of myriad stars above.

She hears the wind in the trees,
The summer rain on the grass,
The prattle of children about her knees;
Soft shadows come and pass
And cluster about her chair,
And fairy fingers blow
Kisses sweet as April air,
From lips of long ago.

Sorrow and pain are past,
Passion and longing are dead;
Evening shadows are falling fast
About her drooping head.
Sitting with folded hands,
With weary eyes and dim,
She sees the glow on the western sands,
The sun on the ocean's rim.

Brothers of the Wind

Do ye not hear the voices of your kin,
Straying brothers of the wind and rain?

Ye dream of life with dumb, unshaken hearts,
And brooding eyes that watch the slow hearth-flames
Flaring in green and mauve and golden light . . .
Wind-harried driftwood melting in one gleam
Of blue, Homeric seas and jewelled sand.

Your lotus-bonded souls that sang at dawn,
Hearing the call of winds that range the world,
Forget old kinship with the wings that cleave,
The hearts that search the borderlands of life.

Behold! The ancient vision and the dream,
Chant of the gray wave, voice of the dim, white rain,
And all the quickening gospels of the wind,
Grow alien to your altars and your creeds.

Coiners of sunlight! Gatherers of dew!
Pan pipes unheeded in the river reeds;
The kindly prophecies of the green earth
Die in your hearts as empty oracles.

O straying brothers of the wind and rain!
Your lodge of old was roofed with friendly stars.
The wild air blossomed with your brushwood fires;
Your sons were bred amid green silences.

Ye were the red earth's children, blood and bone!
Dim memories of forest centuries
Unlocked the secret of the snapping twig,
Swift rustling leaves, splash in the dark pool,
And the unanswered yearning of the wind.

Horizon-breakers in the ancient dawn,
Cleaving the sea-line, piercing the yellow fog!
Have ye forgot the hulls that foamed, the sails
That flamed across the gray waves of the world?

Are there no dreams of noon-day left to men?
Strike off the bondage of your craven years.
Old, dying creeds shall perish from the earth,
And new horizons kindle with new light.

Do ye not hear the voices of your kin,
Straying brothers of the wind and rain?

They That Go Down to the Sea

There's a smell of rotting leaf-mold, and the winds of
Spring are blowing,
There's a voice that lures and whispers in the mad Spring
weather,
As the sunlight on blue water sets the gypsy blood
a-glowing,
And the sailor's heart runs seaward, snapping tie and
breaking tether,
And a thousand ships grow dim on the far sea-line.

They ferret out their cargoes on the other side the world,
Rose pearls and moonlit ivory and golden crocks,
Before the trade winds scudding, in tempest thunders
hurled
Around the world and back again to scum-washed docks.

They seek a hope no heart can name where long waves
whiten,
A dream the wind has moulded out of flying foam;
From burning east to burning west the gray waves lighten,
And driving to the flying sea-line white sails roam.

For the sea with flowing magic fills the hearts of men with vision;
They are hers in bone and sinew, and her love is in their eyes;
Though she smite them with disaster, though she slay them in derision,
They will hear her call and follow till the last breath dies.

They will hear her voice and seek her down the pathways of the mist,
And nose their way around the world till swinging tides shall cease;
They shall gaze without misgiving on the lips her lips have kissed
As they sink through swirling waters where green silence offers peace.

When breaking ice goes seaward and the winds of Spring are blowing,
When a thousand voices whisper in the mad Spring weather,
When sunlight on blue water sets the gypsy blood a-glowing,
Then the sailor's heart runs seaward, snapping tie and breaking tether,
And a thousand ships grow dim on the far sea-line.

Death in the Reeds

No more the sunlight quivers in my veins,
With sudden, piercing ecstacy of life;
Night-shadows deepen in my withered leaves;
Was it not yesterday that I was young?

When Spring was kindling on the barren hills,
And naked marshland trembled into flame,
Blade upon blade I woke unto the sun,
And the long, fragrant kiss of the white wind.

Upon my face I caught the golden fire,
From leaf to leaf it thrilled upon my heart,
And all the brown earth melted into light;
Was it not yesterday that I was young?

The swaying reeds, marsh-brothers, marsh-beloved,
Bowed down their heads before me in the dawn;
The Spring's green passion burned from stalk to stalk,
And life's wild magic throbbed within the root.

Around my feet the waters laughed and whispered,
Telling me secrets of the old, rough earth.

No more the heart flames upward to the sun;
Night-shadows deepen in my withered leaves.
Surely I have but dreamed of life and light!
Or was it yesterday that I was young?

The Ship of Dreams

On the silver trail there's a sail tonight,
And a ship stands in from the far sea-line;
A shape that never is seen by day,
In mist enshrouded and veiled in spray,
Bearing no store of mart or mine.

Out of the haven of heart's desire
Many a year she's overdue;
Dreams forgotten and visions old,
Magic skies, and fairy gold . . .
These are the wares she brings to you.

Spoil of the lands of long ago,
Treasure of years when the heart was young;
Light of unlived splendid days,
Laurel crown, and whispered praise . . .
The blow unstruck and the song unsung.

You never shall hear her anchor chains,
Nor ever the sound of her flapping sail;
Yet eyes that are weary and old and dim
Have seen her far on the ocean's rim
Sailing across the silver trail.

Night-Jewels

Window by window, more and more,
Gleam the evening lights on the curving shore,
A chain of topaz blazing white
On the throbbing bosom of the night.

A glint of ruby, an emerald spark,
From a drifting ship in the velvet dark,
Rise and fall with the long wave's crest
As jewels stir on a woman's breast.

The Quest

The shadow sails grow far and dim,
The shadow squadrons melt away
Beyond the ocean's silver rim,
Beyond the gates of night and day.

Eyes of yearning that know the vision,
Hearts of hunger that seek the gleam,
Stirred by whispers of lands Elysian,
Over the sea-line follow a dream.

Their dreams are woven of sun and tears;
Out of the dusk the South wind blows
Faint music of forgotten years,
The haunting fragrance of a rose.

Ghost Ships

Still are the winds, my love, that laughed at dawn
Upon a sea of dreaming amethyst;
And through the velvet shadows of the dusk
Night flashes golden fire from star to star.

Beneath the sleeping headlands, far and dim,
Touched with the silence of the centuries,
The ghost ships of the world drift with the tide,
One by one out of the twilight stealing.

Fleet-oared triremes of Sidon, and Grecian galleys,
Dim-fabled argosies of silk and spice,
Swift Viking sails of half-forgotten years,
Gray and still they swing with the weary tides.

Love and war and the golden lure of the wind,
Yearning and dim, sweet visions of foreign faces,
Drew them into the mists that blow around
The utmost borders of the world, forever.

Song of the salt, mad wind and wine of the sea,
Cry of the gray wave calling out of the night,
Waken the ghosts of happy, vanished shores,
Waken the murmur of old, dreamlike voices.

One sail that lingers in forgotten lands,
One face that dreams not on the evening air;
Yet in the broken music of the wind,
Blowing from out the gardens of the dawn
I hear your silver laughter, O my love!

Vanished Sails

Under the golden harvest moon
Silver sails on the sea, my love,
Creeping out on the wings of night,
Out to the dawn and the eastern light . . .
Silver sails on the sea, my love.

Under the pallid winter moon
No gleam of a roving sail, my love;
The shores are bare, and the seas are bleak,
And wandering hearts are far to seek;
No gleam of a vanished sail, my love.

Beauty Doth Ever Tease

Beauty doth ever tease
With swift surprises;
From all who seek she flees
In strange disguises.

No heart may hold her fast,
Or hold her long;
She slippeth free at last
With mocking song.

Once in the breathless game
She turned her head:
"Dost thou not know my name
Is love?" she said.

I cried: "At last—the truth!"
She slipped behind me:
"Suppose my name were youth,
How would you find me?"

The Shores of Sleep

At last our ways have found their utmost goal
On the gray shingle of the unbordered sea.

The shrill, insistent voices of the world
Are stilled behind us in a sudden hush,
And the harsh tumult of unhallowed years
Dies in the swaying silence of the deep.

In the far regions of the purple dusk
Forgotten visions stir, and, dimly known,
Peace dreams in the untroubled ocean depths,
Washed in the flowing silver of the stars.

So far, so faint, as of a mightier ocean
Beyond the shadows of the world, there beats
The ebb and flow of time and life and love
Down the dim reaches of Eternity.

Sleep after weary toil. Night folds about us
The velvet mantle of her endless tides;
And the low voices of a holier dawn
Blow from the isles of slumber in the sea.

As I Went Down to Provincetown

As I went down to Provincetown,
Under the hill
Frost was in the marshes,
And the air was chill.

As I went down to Provincetown,
Before a crooked house
I saw an old man sitting
Still as a mouse.

Skin like russet apples,
And shaking hands;
Eyes that searched for something
Beyond the sands.

Low eaves green with moss,
And a low, green door;
But no voice within,
Or foot on the floor.

"A fine, warm place
To be sitting in the sun!"
His eyes sought mine
At the word begun.

"Aye! warm in the sun,
But the air is chill;
The dark comes early . . ."
The house was still.

Said he: "It's quiet here
Day by day;
Never been the same
Since the boys went away.

One made money,
And the like o' that;
Hard for him to get away
From his own door mat.

One went to sea;
Always was a rover,
Driving with the wind
The whole world over.

But one was close as bark to me,
Rain and snow;
Twenty year since he was took . . .
Twenty year ago . . ."

Skin like russet apples,
And shaking hands;
Eyes that searched for something
Beyond the sands.

"A fine, warm sun,
But the air is chill;
The dark comes early . . .
And the nights are still."

The Long Road

Brother, what if the road be long,
Out of the gray town, over the hill!
A gay, good heart and a snatch of song,
And life laughs back as we trudge along.
What if the inns be good or bad!
Turn your face to the wind, my lad;
Take the long road with a will,
Out of the gray town, over the hill!

Brother, what if the day be long!
Journeys end, and the stars, and the sun.
There's a dusty highway ribboning free
Through a jewelled land to a gleaming sea;
Drink a health to the hearts that roam!
Fling the cup at the stay-at-home!
Then take the road till the day be done,
Till journeys end, and the stars, and the sun.

The Truant

O he came back at five o'clock
Who should have come at four,
With slow hand on the turning lock,
And slow foot at the door.

Said he: "I've played the fool, I know."
Said he: "I've played the clown;
But O the apple boughs a-blow
Beyond the edge of town!

And though I come at set of sun
Answering the old call,
Some day—some day I'll turn and run,
And never come back at all."

Heart's Desire

There is a land with sunlight on its rivers,
There is a realm with silver on the sea;
In every scented, vagrant wind there quivers
The chanting of love's elfin melody;
And in her garden where her hopes are springing
From every bud in tender, green attire,
Her still, sweet voice is never weary, singing
Visions of heart's desire.

Musing amid green leaves she sits alone,
With eyes wherein eternity doth sleep;
And all the fairy visions men have known,
All hopes they hold, all vigils that men keep,
She weaves with magic fingers silently,
Conjuring joy from out the depths of pain,
As after ebb the great tides of the sea
Set to the shore again.

For her the world is great, and wide, and free;
Her footsteps touch the meadows into flame.
All love and beauty, death and mystery
Are hinted in the naming of her name.
Wind after wind may hunt her down the world,
Sword upon sword may harry her and mar . . .
At last her crimson banners are unfurled,
Beyond the last, dim star.

Who'll Buy a Rose

Who'll buy a rose? Who'll buy a rose?
Little red rose-cups to catch the dew.
One for a token, two for a smile,
Three if you'll love me a little while!
Who'll buy a rose? Who'll buy a rose?

Put away your pennies, your little silver pennies;
In all the realm of Fairyland there's nothing they will buy.
I met a little fairy once, and tried to buy a silver star;
I met a little fairy once, and tried to buy a star.
She laughed and said, "A bargain O!
Wise little pigs to market go;"
(Her voice was sad) "A bargain O—a penny for the sky!"

Put away your pennies, your little silver pennies,
Can they swim like silver fish, or shine like silver stars?
I've lost the way to Fairyland, but I've no rose to sell
to you;
I've lost the way to Fairyland,—but I've no rose to sell.
(Her voice was sad—"A bargain O!
Wise little pigs to market go.")
O, I've no red, red rose to sell to folk in golden cars.

Who'll buy a rose? Who'll buy a rose?
Little red rose-cups to catch the dew.
One for a token, two for a smile,
Three if you'll love me a little while!
Who'll buy a rose? Who'll buy a rose?

Silver Pennies

The banker's son hath bags of gold,
And silver shillings to lend;
He bartereth hours he may not hoard
For coins he cannot spend.

The banker's son hath a violin,
And a magic bow so fine,
That weaveth songs for many a heart,
But never a song for mine.

For my heart knoweth a secret place
To dwell the whole year long,
Where each day bringeth a silver penny,
And each night bringeth a song.

A Preacher in the Market

A preacher in the market!
I stopped to hear,
And on the market fell
The chiming of a bell.
Then far and near
A voice like distant music on my ear.

He said, "All men are children,
In their play
Hoarding as precious things
Pebbles and colored strings,
The baubles gay,
That drop from tired hands at end of day."

He said, "All men are children
That laugh and weep,
Striving they know not why,
Striving till, day gone by,
Weary and flushed they creep
Into the arms that fold them into sleep."

So preached he in the market!
Rose again
A din of market cries;
Then in his kindly eyes
A smile—as when
One from the hills might look at market men.

Day after Day

Day after day she came and went in silence,
About her round of tasks from dark to dark,
Through streets which filth and squalor and disease
And brawling voices made the courts of Hell.

Within her heart insistent yearnings clamored,
Beneath her eyelids smoldered dumb despair;
Moulded of the divine—cast out to be
Chaff of the threshing-floor upon the wind.

Toil for the crown of slow, undying hours,
And blows for guerdon of her bitter years . . .
Of these she drew a strength of sacrifice
That hallowed life with mute nobility.

But sometimes in the darkness kisses rained
Upon her weary lips, and straining arms
Drew in her broken, frail, uncherished form.
Then strength grew dead within her—and she wept—
Great tears of generations of despair.

The Gates of Dawn

Today, beside the dusty road, I dreamed
Of half-forgotten scenes and days of youth;
Of paths that crossed the cool, fresh fields at dawn,
The glory and the splendor of the dew,
Green leaves against the sun—of days that knew
The witchery and wonder of the world,
Clean winds, white rain, and stars, and children's laughter,
Great argosies upon the summer brooks,
And traffic with the squirrels of the wood;
The quick, sharp ring of skates on winter ice;
Dear, dreaming faces by the brushwood fire,
And the slow, silent fall of midnight snow.

Somewhere the land of youth and love and laughter
Lies near—so near, the echoes of old songs
Beat in the stillness on a leaping heart,
And whisperings of long-remembered voices
Recall the dear, lost treasure of the years . . .

Then upon dreaming eyes the vision falls,
Through gates of silver, and with aching hearts
Men hear again the long roll of the sea,
Beholding the dim sails of great, tall ships
That roamed the world; and those that lie a-fevered
With life's slow pain seem once again to feel
Themselves upborne on the long crested waves
Of shoreless seas; viewing with unfamiliar eyes

The old familiar things that hedge them in;
Hearing the rain that drummed upon the decks
Of ships long wrecked and driven with the winds;
Or starting up from slumber at the moan
Of gales that swept forgotten lands of youth.

And women whose hearts have drunk so deep of life
Even unto the lees, that all its beauty
Burns through the sadness that has made them gray,
And all its splendor sleeps within their eyes
Though old and dim—these feel on weary brows
The winds that blew upon the morning hills,
Whispering far prophecies of pain
Born of great joy, and joy beyond all pain;
When they were brushed by sudden, unseen wings,
And all the ancient gray earth flamed in glory
Beneath a god's feet shining on the hills.

IV

The Torch-Bearers

Here where the sloping meadows run
In laughing bloom to meet the sun,
And dripping rain-sweet apple trees
Spill fragrance on the morning breeze;
Here where the scented hours caress
All the green wood to loveliness,
I hear the bells of Princeton ring
The hours of another Spring.

Mid trees enlacing, green and high,
Three towers dream against the sky,
While round them swirl and laugh and beat
The tides of youth in Nassau Street.
From field and lake, from winding stair,
Laughing voices fill the air,
While golden hours softly chime
And magic stills the pulse of time.

O eager hearts that gaily there
Run to meet life, and find it fair,
Scornful that age so shrewdly sips
The cup they drain with thirsting lips!
O hope that dwells in eager eyes
Untouched of wintry agonies,
Smiling to see age grown so slow
To stake life lightly at one throw!

O feet that pass the open door
To come no more—to come no more!

Years flower and change and die away;
Still comes new beauty with the May;
Still flow the joyous tides of youth
Loving beauty, seeking truth,
Lifting the torch that age lays down.

O ivied walls! O dreaming town!
Who knows what secret blossoming
Shall be the glory of thy Spring?

Princeton, 1917

He dropped his book; he left his task;
He cast his gown away,
Hearing a great cry in the wind:
"It is The Day—The Day!"
Out of the river and under the hill,
His ship went down the bay.

God knows the rose grew tall and fair
In Flanders' fields, and Picardy;
And bird-songs once filled all the air
From meadow grass, and swaying tree;
God knows the children's dreams were sweet
As any dream could be.

He rose at the first bugle-note,
Putting his youth away,
With morning light upon his face
And a high heart and gay.
I think that God hath blessed the ground
Where he lies today.

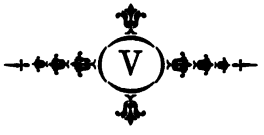
To H. C. B.

Of thee, whom honor drew
As moon the sea,
What words have we that knew
For elegy?

Lover of truth, thou art
Where all is true;
The whole that of the part
Death doth renew.

Lover of beauty thou,
Beyond all art
Made one with beauty now,
And beauty's heart.

Lover of chivalry
And gentleness,
Gently death deal with thee,
And slow time bless.



A Christmas Charm

Heap on the logs this Christmas Day,
Fill all the house with light and cheer,
That friends may lift the latch, steal in
And linger here.

Heap on the logs this Christmas Day,
To warm us with a magic art,
That winter's chill may never freeze
Upon the heart.

Heap on the logs this Christmas Day!
We'll conjure from their ruddy gleams
A secret charm to fill the year
With Christmas dreams!

Nursery Songs for Christmas Eve

I

It was a little candle, dear,
Beside your Christmas tree,
That danced, and laughed, and danced again,
And winked most roguishly.

But when the tree, unheeding,
Stood stiffly in his place,
The little candle bowed her head,
With tears upon her face.

II

Not all the gleaming holly,
And silver mistletoe,
Nor far, thin carols on the air,
Across the drifted snow,

Make up the tale of Christmas . . .
But deep within your eyes
To see the joy of Christmas shine
Like stars in Christmas skies.

III

Christmas comes but once a year,
So the wise folk say, my dear;

But they quite forget to say
That Christmas always comes to stay.

Over the drifts of this year's snow
Ring Christmas bells of long ago;

And by these candle-gleams we see—
How many a vanished Christmas tree!

May Christmas joy and Christmas cheer
Abide within this house, my dear!

So shall your heart still sing in May
The songs you sang on Christmas Day.

Three Songs for Christmas

I

We'll hang the walls with holly boughs,
And silver mistletoe;
We'll light a Yule-flame on the hearth
And fill the room with candle-glow.

Yet Love could still keep Christmas Day,
Though all the house were bare . . .
One song of Yuletide on your lips,
One spray of holly in your hair.

II

If I could dress a Christmas tree
With all the gifts you've given me—

The spell you weave in magic ways
Of quiet peace through all our days;

The healing word, the shy caress,
The secret dream of happiness,—

I'd hang them on a Christmas tree
And give them back, my dear, to thee.

III

Who hath nor purse, nor golden coin,
Who holds no lands in fee,
He singeth gay on Christmas Day
In jolly beggary.

For who hath nought to give but love,
Gives all his heart away,
And giving all, hath all to give
Another Christmas Day.

A Christmas Prayer

God bless this house on Christmas Day,
And all who in it dwell;
And send us work, and send us play,
And many a glad Noel.

God send us store on Christmas Day
Of friends, and health, and mirth;
And bless us with that dream alway,
That blessed the world on Christmas Day:
"Good will, and peace on earth."

And think ye well on Christmas Day
That love is more than art,
And the words of love and cheer alway
Rhyme well within the heart.

So sing we all on Christmas Day
Old songs of Christmas cheer.
God grant us brave, true words to say;
Yea! help us live some better way
In all the glad new year.

VI

The Walls of Hamelin

So under shining, summer skies
The Piper stood with musing eyes;
The June wind blew through Hamelin town
Twitching his torn and tattered gown.
Their cunning mockery he heard
Unheeding . . .
Somewhere near, a bird
Sang of the sun and laughing dew,
Sang of the scented earth he knew
Beyond the town, beyond the moat,
Where laughter bubbled in the throat,
Where men were free, where life was warm,
Unsmitten of the icy storm
That numbs the heart.
The Piper stirred
As at some half-forgotten word;
His fingers on his pipes of reed
Touched all the stops—and paused; indeed
Like dreamers in the dawn of day
Half-waking at the scent of May.

He lifted up his eyes, and lo!
Drab streets unlit by any glow
Of sun, or silver of the stars;
Drab houses locked with iron bars . . .
A place of faithless, scornful men
Sunk in their ledger-world again,

Who drove the gray rats from the mart,
But let them nest within the heart;
Selling life with market cries
That rose like smoke to steely skies.

Then in the sudden stillness fell
A thin, sweet strain, a silver spell;
And from the pipes of reed there flowed
Songs of the sea, the winding road,
The warm earth's scented, sunny mirth,
And love that had no market worth:

Love is the heart's desire
For the moon—for the star,
With frail wings that aspire
To all heavens that are.

No houses built with hands,
No walls of stone,
Rise in the laughing lands
Love calls her own.

Love goeth where love will
By land and sea,
Breaking all bonds until
The world is free . . .

And as the reed-notes drifted down
The cobble streets of Hamelin town

Like sudden fragrance in a room
From rain-washed lilac boughs in bloom
The burghers stirred uneasily,
Fearful what thing might come to be
With such songs sung before the door
As never in Hamelin town before.

But in each barred and shuttered house
The children, still as any mouse,
Stood motionless to hear that strain
Drifting like sweet April rain
From some far land of singing skies
Whose blue still slumbered in their eyes,
Some fairyland of golden light
They half-remembered in the night.

Still sweet and sweeter flowed the song,
As clear, cool waters slip along
A fern-rimmed bank—more sweet, more sweet,
Till every winding, cobble street
Was filled with sound of little feet . . .

Before their eyes the river ran
With laughter never heard of man,
And meadow grass and orchard tree
Sang an ancient melody;
The gray walls melted from their sight
And blue skies filled with morning light.

Laughing, dancing in the sun,
Like echoes of the song begun,
Beyond the walls, beyond the town,
With streaming hair and flying gown,
Amid the stillness of the noon,
Under the golden sun of June,
They followed, followed, to the hill
The singing pipes that drew them still:

Love is older than life,
And longer than breath;
Love is bolder than strife,
And stronger than death.

Over the hills of dawn
And far away,
Soft on the dewy lawn
Her white feet stray.

Except ye seek as a child,
With a child's heart,
Loveliness defiled
Shall be your part.

Love goeth where love will
By land and sea,
Breaking all bonds until
The world is free.

Love is the heart's desire
For the moon—for the star,
With frail wings that aspire
To all heavens that are . . .

Faint and fainter flowed the strain;
Fainter—and ceased—and grew again . . .
Then died away to come no more,
As with the shutting of a door,
Save for a far, thin fairy quill
Blown in the grasses on the hill.

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